

BOTSWANA

Research paper's abstract



This paper explores the manner in which international and regional norms and standards of elections interact to respond to electoral related violence in national jurisdictions. Using mixed methods, it begins by identifying key historical, structural and cultural antecedents to electoral violence and briefly analyses the geographical spread and trends in violent elections in Africa. In addition, the paper examines the levels of public trust in political institutions and leadership in order to illuminate the specific contexts that portend threats to electoral integrity. Exploiting particular country cases, the author illustrates to what effect Treaty and non-Treaty standards and ancillary instruments have been deployed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to resolve electoral related conflict in national situations, underlining their strengths and weaknesses.

The case of Botswana is juxtaposed in an attempt to glean lessons, if any, from its history of non-violent elections. Employing *historical analysis* and *participant observation*, the author emphasises the need to promote the creation of inclusive political institutions and consensus based electoral systems; as well as enhancing the role of religious leaders in conflict prevention and management as part of a long term strategy to addressing electoral related violence. Finally, the author argues that the recent structural changes to the regional normative framework for elections by the SADC might provide opportunities for non-state actors to position their knowledge products and expertise to inform various inter-related regional processes ranged at peace building.